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1. PROSPECTS FOR COMMUNIST SUPPORT OF A FRENCH GOVERNMENT

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The American embassy in Paris speculates that the French Communist Party, despite rebuffs of its overtures for a popular front, may now be trying to force Mendes-France's Republican Front to accept its parliamentary support for a new government without Communist representation in the cabinet. The Communists emphasize that with their support the Republican Front could control the assembly. Except on foreign policy, their political program has been readjusted to include objectives which in most cases probably would be pursued by a Republican Front government. The Communist Party under these circumstances would probably avoid obstructionist tactics in order to create the fiction of a popular front for propaganda purposes.

Comment

The uncompromising stand of Republican Front leaders Guy Mollet and Mendes-France suggests that they are considering a minority government which the Faure-Pinay forces would be obliged to tolerate.

The constitution permits a government to be invested with less than an absolute majority of the whole assembly, and Republican Front leaders might attempt a minority government if they were to get a majority of those voting exclusive of Communist support.

Socialist leaders are particularly sensitive to the threat of Communist co-operation because of pressure within many Socialist local federations for a popular front. It may be in an attempt to counter this threat that ex-president Auriol is reportedly prepared to head a coalition which would include right-center ministers. A compromise coalition of ministers from both the Republican Front and Faure-Pinay forces remains the most likely solution.

2. COMMUNIST CHINA SEEKING TRADE PACT WITH SAUDI ARABIA

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The announcement from Peiping on 9 January that a high-level Chinese Communist trade delegation is now in Saudi Arabia indicates that the Chinese probably expect to conclude a trade agreement with the Saudis along the lines of their recently concluded pacts with Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon.

The Chinese consider this mission important in their vigorous campaign to foster relations with Arab states, and it is led by Chiang Ming, a deputy minister of foreign trade. The mission, according to a press report from Jidda, was invited by the Saudi Arabian government to discuss co-operation in trade between the two countries.

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3. END OF BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY REBELLION MAY BE IMMINENT

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The statement by Burmese premier Nu on 10 January that his government is willing to legalize the insurgent Burma Communist Party if it will renounce force as a means to achieve its aims suggests that the unobtrusive peace

talks under way for the past few months are about to reach a successful conclusion. The Communists, who have been fighting the government since February 1948, have offered publicly to surrender in return for guarantees that Burma not join "the Anglo-American bloc," that political prisoners be released, and that full constitutional freedoms be accorded to all "democratic groups."

Nu said, "We have nothing against Communist ideology," but made it clear that the Communists would not be taken into his present government. He indicated that if a settlement were reached, the Communists would be free to participate in the parliamentary elections scheduled for April.

The Communists command a sizable following, which includes the pro-Communist Burmese Workers and Peasants Party--already represented in parliament--influential student groups, and peasant support in areas that have been under their control. In open political action, the Communists would be able to exploit to their own advantage any benefits Burma may derive from its increasingly close economic and political ties with the Sino-Soviet Orbit.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 10 January)

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No significant military activity has been reported. Minor firing has occurred across the Egyptian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli frontiers.

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